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Programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1998

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted to inform the General Assembly of the requirements resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1998.

2. The Council adopted a number of resolutions and decisions in which it authorized relevant functional commissions, standing committees or expert bodies to undertake additional activities, including meetings, in excess of those initially programmed in the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999. In accordance with rule 31 of its rules of procedure, the Council was provided, where appropriate, with a statement of programme budget implications prior to the adoption of these resolutions and decisions.

3. With regard to the substantive requirements, which were identified in the amount of $110,500 under section 22 (Human rights) of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999, the Commission on Human Rights and the Council were informed that those requirements would be met from within the initial appropriation approved by the General Assembly for the biennium 1998–1999.

4. With regard to additional conference-servicing requirements, the Council was informed in each case that provision was already made under section 27E (Conference services) of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999, not only for meetings programmed at the time of budget preparation but also for meetings authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings were consistent with the pattern of meetings of past years.

5. By its resolution 1998/46 on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, the Council:

(a) Adopted the texts contained in the annexes to the resolution;

(b) Decided to hold, at its resumed substantive session of 1998, elections for the composition of the bodies, as laid down in annex I to the resolution, so that those bodies would be fully constituted from 1 January 1999, and requested the Bureau to work out appropriate mechanisms for the holding of the elections for that purpose;

(c) Decided to bring the resolution to the attention of the General Assembly in pursuance of paragraph 70 of annex I to Assembly resolution 50/227 and paragraphs 9 and 10 of Assembly resolution 52/12 B.

6. Annex I to resolution 1998/46 provides, *inter alia*, for the following:

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(a) The Commission on Science and Technology for Development shall remain a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council and shall continue to meet biennially for two weeks; the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development shall continue to serve as the secretariat of the Commission; the membership of the Commission is to be reduced from 53 to 33, with the following geographical distribution: eight members from African States; seven members from Asian States; six members from Latin American and Caribbean States; four members from Eastern European States; and eight members from Western European and other States. The term of office is to be four years;

(b) The Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development and the Committee on Natural Resources shall be merged into a single expert body to be named the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development which shall serve as a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development should comprise, with due attention to geographical representation and gender balance, two subgroups of 12 experts nominated by Governments and approved by the Economic and Social Council. One subgroup should deal with issues relating to energy, the other with issues relating to water resources. The geographical distribution is to be as follows: six members from African States; five members from Asian States; four members from Latin American and Caribbean States; three members from Eastern European States; and six members from Western European and other States. The term of office is to be four years. The Committee shall meet biennially for two weeks on the understanding that the days available would be divided evenly in a flexible manner between the two subgroups. Upon the recommendation of both or either of the expert groups of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development, the Economic and Social Council may decide modalities for the establishment of ad hoc expert groups, when necessary, to consider issues relating to minerals.

7. The decisions of the Council contained in resolution 1998/46 relate to sections 11A (Trade and development) and 7A (Economic and social affairs) of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999. As indicated above, the implications of these decisions were submitted to the Council in document E/1998/L.35 and are as follows:

(a) The members of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development will be entitled to travel but not to a daily subsistence allowance, as is the case for other functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council. In addition, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/75 of 30 July 1993, it is assumed that the Commission will continue to receive specialized and technical advice from the ad hoc panels that will meet also once in the biennium to review/examine specific issues of science and technology for development and advise the Commission thereon. The Commission was scheduled to meet in 1999. A provision of $352,500 was appropriated in the current biennium under section 11A of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999. The related costs for the 1999 session of the restructured Commission are estimated to amount to approximately $292,500. The restructuring of the Commission would thus result in a reduction of the requirements under section 11A in the amount of $60,000;

(b) Provisions of $142,300 for the Committee on Natural Resources and of $115,000 for the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development were made under section 7A of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999. It is understood that, as for the two restructured Committees, the members of the new Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development will be entitled to travel and a daily subsistence allowance. On that basis, it is estimated that the related 1999 requirements of the new Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development would amount to $164,400. The merger of two Committees into one would thus result in a reduction of the requirements under section 7A in the amount of $92,900.

8. The Council has also been informed that the revised conference-servicing requirements for its machinery restructured by resolution 1998/46 would be met from within the existing appropriation under section 27E (Conference services) of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999.

9. In summary, the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during its substantive session of 1998 would result in a reduction of the requirements against the 1998–1999 appropriation in the amount of $152,900. Such reduced requirements will be reflected in the first performance report for the biennium 1998–1999.